

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A virtual world system, comprising:
a server computer;

a plurality of terminal computers connected to said server computer, wherein avatars of operators of said plurality of terminal computers are displayed in a virtual world generated on said server computer, and are caused to act on the basis of operations by the operators of said plurality of terminal computers, each of said plurality of terminal computers being operable to ~~make~~ award an object having a predetermined data format ~~available on said terminal computer~~ to the operator of said terminal computer to be controlled by the operations by the operator of said terminal computer when the operator solves a problem in an interactive game presented during execution of a first game program on said terminal computer, said first game program being executable independently from execution of a second program for displaying the object in the virtual world, each of said plurality of terminal computers including a control unit operable to permit the operator of said terminal computer to participate in said virtual world by transmitting information regarding the operations by the operator to said server computer and, under control of the operator of said terminal computer, transmitting the awarded object to said server computer under control of the operator to which the object is awarded,

wherein said server computer includes

an object storage unit operable to store a plurality of the objects transmitted from ones of said plurality of terminal computers in association with information identifying the operators of said ones of said plurality of terminal computers;
and

object display means operable to display the stored plurality of objects in the virtual world on said plurality of terminal computers on the basis of the operations by the operators identified by the stored identifying information, using the information regarding the operations received from said plurality of terminal computers.

2-6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) A recording medium as claimed in Claim 21, wherein said method further comprises:

permitting the player to access the server computer and to participate in the virtual world generated by the server computer, said step of executing the second application to display~~displaying~~ the awarded object including displaying at least a portion of the virtual world; and

making the awarded object available for control by the player in the virtual world.

8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A recording medium as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said method further comprises:

setting an attribute for the awarded object which is transmitted to the server computer; and

determining a mode in which the operator uses the awarded object in the virtual world based on the attribute.

10-18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) A server computer, comprising:

an object record area operable to store object data concerning objects displayable in a virtual world, the object data being stored in conformity with a predetermined data format;

a virtual world control unit operable to generate the virtual world and to output object display information to participant terminals in communication with said server computer for controlling display of the objects in the virtual world on the participant terminals in accordance with operations by operators of the participant terminals;

a communication control unit operable to receive the object data and information regarding the operations by the operators from the participant terminals, the object data including objects awarded to operators of the participant terminals in response to the operators solving problems in interactive games presented during execution of first game programs on the participant terminals, the first game programs being executable independently from second programs executable to display the virtual world, the awarded objects being received from transmissions controlled by the operators to which the objects are awarded,

wherein the object record area is operable to store the received object data in association with information identifying the operators of ones of the participant terminals having transmitted the object data, and

the virtual world control unit is operable to output the object display information for display of the awarded objects using the object data stored in the object record area in accordance with the received information regarding the operations by the operators and the stored information identifying the operators.

20. (currently amended) An information processor, comprising:

a control unit operable to execute a game application to enable interactive game play by a player, and upon execution of

the game application, to present a problem in an interactive game to the player and award an object to the player when the player solves the problem, the object having a predetermined data format, the control unit further being operable to execute a second application independently from executing the game application to display the object together with other items with which the object interacts in a virtual world facilitated by a server computer; and

a communication control unit operable to transmit the object and information concerning operations by the player to the server computer in association with information identifying the player for incorporation of the object in the virtual world under control of the player to which the object is awarded and to receive from the server computer information for displaying the object together with the other items in accordance with the operations by the player.

21. (currently amended) A recording medium having information recorded thereon for performing a method of handling an object for incorporation in a virtual world and displaying the object, the method comprising:

executing a game application by an information processor to enable interactive game play by a player including presenting a problem to the player in an interactive game and awarding an object to the player by the interactive game when the player solves the problem, the awarded object having a predetermined data format;

under control by the player, transmitting the awarded object from the information processor to a server computer;

transmitting first information concerning first operations by the player from the information processor to the server computer;

incorporating the transmitted object in a virtual world generated by the server computer in accordance with the first information and second information regarding second operations by an operator of at least one other information processor in communication with the server computer; and

executing a second application independently from said execution of the game application to display the awarded object at the information processor using information received from the server computer regarding the virtual world, wherein the information received from the server computer takes into account the first information and the second information.

22. (currently amended) A virtual world system, comprising:

a server computer operable to generate a virtual world; and

a plurality of participant terminals in communication with the server computer, each participant terminal including

a terminal display unit operable to execute a first program to display an image including a plurality of objects of the virtual world and to enable an operator at the participant terminal to interact with the virtual world,

an object providing unit operable to ~~make~~ award an object having a predetermined format, ~~of the plurality of objects included in the image, available on~~ to the operator of the participant terminal to be controlled by the operations by the operator of the participant terminal when the operator solves a problem presented in an interactive game during execution of a second program on the terminal computer, the second program being executable independently from the first program, and

a communication unit operable to transmit the awarded ~~an object~~ the operator to the server computer under control of ~~selected by~~ the operator of the participant terminal to which the object is awarded ~~to the server computer,~~

and the server computer including

a storage unit operable to receive the ~~selected~~ object ~~transmitted object~~ and to store the ~~selected~~ received object in association with information identifying the operator of the participant terminal from which the ~~selected~~ object was transmitted, and

a server display unit operable to generate information for display of stored virtual objects in the virtual world by the participant terminals on the basis of operations by the operators identified by the stored identifying information, the operations being communicated from the participant terminals to the server computer, wherein the communication unit of each participant terminal is operable to receive the information generated by the server display unit, and the terminal display unit of each participant terminal is operable to generate the image using the information received from the server display unit.

23. (currently amended) A method of handling an object for incorporation in a virtual world and display of the object, comprising:

executing a game application by an information processor to enable interactive game play by a player including presenting a problem to the player in an interactive game and awarding an object to the player by the interactive game when the player solves the problem, the awarded object having a predetermined data format;

under control by the player, transmitting the awarded object from the information processor to a server computer;

transmitting first information concerning first operations by the player from the information processor to the server computer;

incorporating the transmitted object in a virtual world generated by the server computer in accordance with the first information and second information regarding second operations by an operator of at least one other information processor in communication with the server computer; and

executing a second application independently from said execution of the game application to display the awarded object at the information processor using information received from the server computer regarding the virtual world, wherein the information received from the server computer takes into account the first information and the second information.

24. (currently amended) A virtual world system as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~an~~ the object ~~made available by said terminal computer to the operator~~ awarded during execution of the first game program is not defined in the virtual world prior to the execution of the first program.